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The EDUCATIONAL MISSIONARY



IN
NORTH
AMERICA
AND
ABROAD
IN MORE
THAN
40
COUNTRIES

1. Who Is a "Born Teacher"?

You are. You may not have started life with a lot of congenital equipment for teaching. But you were born into a world, a Church, and an environment which demand that you teach. Consider these things:

Your Generation:

You were born into a human generation which needs teaching urgently. Even with our wondrous systems of communication, over half the population of the world cannot read or write. Illiterate people are constantly victimized by fear, superstition, and dictatorship both spiritual and political. True, the mass literacy programs initiated by Christian missionaries, notably Dr. Frank Laubach, have taught millions to read. Agencies of the United Nations have set out to tackle the problem. Some governments are making a sincere effort in this direction. But the task is still enormous. Take just one country, India: 88 percent of India's people are illiterate; 75 percent of India's Christians are illiterate. There are still 1,700 local languages in the world which have no written Gospel.

And our concern cannot be simply with literacy in the narrow sense, but with breadth of living, spiritual insight, great social attitudes, and goals of freedom—these call for teachers in thousands of schoolrooms across our planet. The ignorance and small-mindedness of most of the members of our own generation throughout the world have become a tragic threat to culture itself.

Your Faith:

You were born, the Christian faith says, into a Church whose main purpose is to declare God's truth "to every creature." Our Lord Jesus Christ is the Great Teacher. One who would follow Him must have something to teach, to share, to exemplify in his own life. When a Christian looks out at our world, he realizes because of his own inner experience that what people really need to be taught is not just reading, nor engineering skills, nor scientific know-how, but rather (before all these) their relation to God. Is there any greater need, abroad or nearby, than that for the Gospel? Here alone do people learn the truth which changes their deepest motivations, brings them fulfillment instead of

restlessness, and enables them to grow into the "measure of the fulness of the stature of Christ." If you are a Christian, you are born to do that kind of teaching, wherever the Church needs it most.

Your Community:

You were born, most likely, into a family and a community which make you a teacher. The very fact that you are reading this leaflet indicates that you have special advantages, that you are privileged beyond most people now alive. As you come into contact with less fortunate fellow men for the rest of your life, you will be teaching, declaring, proclaiming something—even if you are silent in your witness. If you go into business, you will be setting an example. If you raise children, the teaching you give them will be the most important they will get. What you do and say in the community will constitute teaching—subscribing to certain values and announcing them by word and deed.

In our day, Americans especially are teaching the world, sometimes unhappily, by their whole code of international behavior and cultural witness. You *teach* in this generation, whether you want to or not!

You were born with opportunities to become a skilled teacher. It takes training and continuing concern and dedication to teach in the name of the Church. If you really want to serve God through a mission opportunity for teaching, and prayerfully seek your way ahead educationally, you will find a way to make your witness most effective.

2. What Jobs Are Calling?

When you think about a missionary teaching job, knock down any barriers you may have as to place and special profession. Missionary teachers needed right now are men or women, married or single, for tasks at home or abroad, to be performed by people ordained or unordained, as pioneers or settled teachers, among children or youth or adults (or all three), for long-term or short-term service, teaching almost any subject you could name.

Look at *Christian Horizons*, the Student Volunteer Movement's annual listing of missionary openings. You will find that teachers of both sexes are now wanted in South America, Siam, Africa, Harlem (New York),

Japan, India, Arizona, Alaska, and many other places. Small children, from Eskimos to Bantus, need elementary-school teachers. High schools and colleges are calling for help. Vocational teachers are needed, for fields from electrical work to shoemaking. Teachers with M.A.'s or Ph.D.'s are in demand for posts in theological seminaries abroad. And mission schools in dozens of countries need teachers of the English language.

Are most of these missionary teachers ordained ministers? No: a minority of them are ordained. They are men and women who want their teaching to serve the highest purpose they know, namely, to open people's lives into the fulness which God intended for them. Here is the statement which mission boards have long been making: *You may be appointed by a mission board to do work in any field in which you could take graduate work in an American university.* In other words, the primary skill of a missionary teacher can be dietetics, classical languages, business administration, printing, rural hygiene, piano, Braille, or any one of a hundred other fields.

To be sure, there is not an opening every year in every agency in every one of these fields. Sometimes candidates have to wait for some years before their chosen field is ready. But more often agencies have to leave a job open year after year, in the face of real need on the field, because no candidate is yet available.

3. Is This the Job for Me?

We've said that everybody of your generation, your faith, your environment, your opportunities is a "born teacher." Not all of you born teachers will become professional teachers, naturally, and not all of you who are considering this profession will become missionary teachers. If the idea of teaching appeals to you, it's probably because you want to impart the knowledge and the fulness of your life to the next generation, and to share in their ever-fresh discovery of the meaning of living. How strong is this desire in you? How far will it carry you?

A teacher in the ordinary public school or college in this country spends part of his or her time preparing for classes, another part actually teaching, and another part studying the results of his teaching. These are the limits of his job, and beyond that he is on his own. He may use his free time to get acquainted with his students and their families, to lead or participate in outside activities with them, or he may use his free time to "get away from it all." If he does the latter, chances are he doesn't really enjoy teaching. He wouldn't make a good missionary teacher nor a happy one, and neither would you if you shared his viewpoint. The missionary teacher is a teacher *plus*. "Plus what?" you ask.

Three Requirements

First, he is a *fully committed Christian*. Jesus Christ is his acknowledged Lord, and he has an overwhelming urge to further the world mission of the Church. This urge will carry him happily through difficult human situations, through years of hard work, through a lifetime spent perhaps in the far corners of the earth, perhaps almost next door.

Second, he is a *well-balanced human being*. The personal qualities that make a good teacher anywhere are essential for a missionary teacher. Think of the best teachers you yourself have had, and you can enumerate most of the qualifications yourself. The ability to lead, to create sympathy and trust; patience, tact, common sense, intellectual acuteness, emotional stability. Add at least one other especially for the missionary teacher: the gift of warm friendship which transcends racial and social barriers.

Third, he has a *healthy body*. If his work takes him to another climate, he must be able to adjust to it. And no matter where he works, he must be physically fit for long hours and a strenuous life.

Beyond the Classroom

Why are the standards so high? A missionary teacher is a teacher *plus* because his teaching does not end when his students in English, history, science, or Bible get up and leave the classroom at the end of the session. He goes out with them and goes right on teaching. There are student fellowships and school publications which need his guidance. He teaches his own avocations as well as his specialty—handicrafts, music, athletics, and so on. He may lead adult education classes. People in the local church will want him to take an active part in their work, as teacher, counselor, or officer. He reaches out into the community in many ways, depending on his skills and interests—in student work projects, in extension and laboratory work, perhaps in the solution of some community problem. He may want to carry on some research and writing of his own. And above all, he will give time to personal friendships and individual counselling.

It's a big job, and it makes you stop and think.

4. The Savor of a New Life

What is it like to be a missionary teacher? You can be pretty sure it's like nothing you ever did before. You want to get the flavor of it: the daily problems and experiences and satisfactions. Teachers now on the field can tell you best about that, and you will want to read their reports and talk to those that are home on furlough if you can. Meanwhile, here are some excerpts from their letters:

"I Sweated Beside the Lamp . . ."

A Christian teacher in India can express a small annoyance and a large problem almost in the same breath: "The fourteen filmstrips that I ordered from the U. S. Information Service had to be shown during the hottest week since May. Day after day, with doors shut to make the hall dark, I sweated beside the 300-watt lamp in my projector. . . . [In another village she visited] there is no Christian school and so there is no Christian teacher to lead the people in worship even on Sunday. Doing evangelistic work must end in building Christian schools."

"Time Is Jet-Propelled . . ."

This comes from a teacher of French and physical education in a Negro high school in North Carolina: "Many of our students come from broken homes, others from homes that don't want them. It doesn't take even

one psychology course to tell you that these girls need love as well as direction and education. . . . The girls run the gamut from the unusually gifted to the unbelievably retarded. Any illusion of a thirst after knowledge on the part of the student body might better be dispelled right now. . . . And are we happy? Anyone here—student or staff member—will say that no day has 24 hours, no week seven days. Time doesn't fly; it is jet-propelled!"

"The kitchen house collapsed," writes the head of a mission school in El Salvador, Central America. "It took over a week of fast work, with the girls often forming lines to stack the roof tiles and later to pass them from hand to hand as they went into place again on the roof. Meanwhile the food for the school had to be prepared on small oil stoves and scattered campfires. . . ."

Basement Work Camp

"This spring," says a missionary teacher in Japan, "I started a game room in the basement, to try to show the girls that there is more to Christianity than a fifteen-minute chapel period each morning . . . that Christianity also includes fun and fellowship together. We have a wonderful time even though over sixty girls have crowded into that dirty little space each week." She has organized a small-scale work camp to remodel the basement. A student wrote to this teacher, "Through your serious, humorous, sincere, and modest way of teaching and studying, I find myself to be taken into the heart of the Love of Our Lord."

His School or His Faith?

A Burmese boy is driven out of his Buddhist home by his father because he won't promise not to attend the Christian church any more. "The headmistress and his class teacher took him home and talked with his father, who repeated his statement that the boy could not stay at home unless he gave up Christianity. The headmistress asked permission to keep the boy in school, and the father agreed." But later the boy was taken out of school; his father insisted he must take a job in a military hospital or give up his faith. "We advised him," writes his teacher, "to go home and to show Christ's spirit. When the father found that his son would quit school and go to work rather than give up Christ, he let him return to school and to church."

"Her Hands Must Be Taught . . ."

A girl from a ranch, from a broken home, comes to a mission school in New Mexico. After eight months, "She tells us that she had never dreamed of so many young people working, worshipping, eating, studying, and playing together. Her hands were red and swollen from the heavy work of the fields. Now they must be taught to sew a neat seam, to set a table, to wash and iron by means of electricity, to cook food other than beans and potatoes. . . ."

Manifestly, the job of a missionary teacher is exciting and varied. In a school in India, the physical education teacher takes over a Sunday morning service on a day's notice. In a North Carolina mission college, the wife of the print-shop supervisor accompanies the college choir. A missionary who started in China as a specialist in entomology is now working in the Philip-

pines in the whole field of agriculture, giving part time to a Christian college and part time in direct work with Filipino farmers. He has helped start a school of agriculture in the college; held three schools in extension methods for government workers; hopes to start an orchard, garden, fishpond, or poultry farm for each of 180 churches. In his spare time he is trying to replace technical literature destroyed during the war.

"It Is Planting Time Again . . ."

From the Philippines come these two thoughts, one rising out of a difficult moment, one from the ever-present feeling of hope in the heart of a missionary teacher:

"It is HOT. . . . We did have a typhoon which cooled us off for three days. . . . I can't afford to employ the teaching staff and office force we should have, so I am just having to do the impossible. It is a good thing I am strong and healthy, or I would already have fallen by the wayside."

"It is rice-planting time in the open field around the campus. All about us are the women in their bright dresses setting out the lovely green plants. It is 'planting time' again in the college: next week we begin another semester. Pray with us . . . that the harvest may be rich."

Seed-time and harvest in this vineyard of minds and souls require skillful teachers as well as devoted ones. The rest of this leaflet will tell you how to qualify yourself professionally for missionary teaching.

5. What Training Do I Need?

Obviously, if you plan to become a missionary teacher, you need to focus on some particular field of study. Academic and practical requirements are, in fact, closely parallel with those demanded by public school systems in this country. That usually means college training plus a year or two of graduate work in one special field before a candidate is appointed. Some highly specialized fields require even more training, but you will discover these requirements as you plan your curriculum.

Speaking of specialization, an interesting aspect of today's mission program deals with this problem. When a specialized candidate is available in a denomination or agency which at that time has no need for him or her, the candidate may often be put in touch (through shared personnel forms) with another agency which does need such a worker, and that agency then makes the appointment. Also, mission boards these days are for the most part ready to improvise, to map out pioneer combinations of skills (as for example for a married couple, both specially trained) which will serve a specific need in unprecedented ways. The candidate eager to do some special job usually finds the agencies ready and prompt to "tailor" a job for his particular skills and concerns.

Your Cultural Breadth

Besides his specialty, the missionary teacher needs the following professional qualifications:

(1) He must be master of his own language both in speaking and in effective writing.

(2) He must have reasonable ability to learn a foreign language, and enjoy the mastery of languages to the point of proficiency.

(3) He must have a sound general education and the habit of continuing study.

It is especially important, if you plan to do missionary teaching, that you take as broad a cultural course as you can before your specialty requires you to narrow down. The chances are you'll be working with very underprivileged people. So it is well to know every possible aspect of cultural life: literature, art, music, philosophy, psychology, social studies—courses which will enrich both your own personal life, in places which may be culturally barren, and also the lives of those you teach in Christ's name. These studies may also help you grasp and appreciate the cultural values of the new society in which you find yourself.

Then, just as for teaching posts here in American public schools, you will need actual experience in instruction, supervised by wise teachers. A missionary teacher owes it to his or her vocation to learn the most effective, most fruitful methods of teaching for the age-level involved. There is no place for the professionally second-best in the service of the Church.

The language problem is easier than it used to be, with new phonetic methods and on-the-job training. Most mission agencies prefer to have candidates defer any language training until the very last months before starting the job, or even until placement in the mission situation itself, where learning is spurred by the immediate pressures of communication.

Your Spiritual Depth

Along with formal training, of course, comes the far more vital "life of the soul" in the preparation for missionary teaching. Daily devotion and rededication may run into snags and reverses during school days, but to continue them is the deepest preparation you can have. Prayer groups, conference experiences, the encircling fellowship of the Church, conversation with missionaries and other candidates—all are essential. Cultivation of physical stamina, emotional stability, and social sensitiveness are part of the same preparation. Missionary work demands strong, well people, acquainted with their fellows and with the social problems of their world.

6. What "Future" Is There in It?

Like any mission job, missionary teaching is by no means a "get rich quick" proposition. But salaries are geared to the community where you live, and regularly

paid by any regular mission agency or board. Allowance is usually made for medical expense and sabbatical leaves. Pension plans are in general use. Many agencies provide the most up-to-date equipment for teaching, such as audio-visual aids, public-address systems, and other excellent helps. Because missionary schooling, both in this country and abroad, parallels growing public school programs, doing a specialized Christian job in addition to what may be offered locally among privileged citizens, mission schools must maintain high standards both of personnel and of equipment. Also, because political crises occasionally demand shifting of personnel from region to region, or even hemisphere to hemisphere, professional standards among missionary teachers must be kept continually high.

Service is his vocation, yet in the course of time the missionary teacher can record achievements, rewards, and satisfactions comparable to those of the most envied careerists in his profession:

He takes young people out of a limiting environment and gives them trades and skills and competency and vision for their homes, churches, and communities.

He may liberate into beauty the art and music buried in the lives of backward people.

The modern Christian school in which he teaches may become the model for a government school system.

The men and women whom he trains often become the founders of new schools and colleges where they are needed, or the leaders of new social movements.

As authority and writer, as teacher and friend, he finds his life filled with the warmth of Christian love and service truly rendered.

What greater career can a Christian embark on?

7. How Do I Start?

If you are even just beginning to be interested in missionary teaching, here's what you can do:

Talk about it with any deeply dedicated Christian leader you know.

Pray about it seriously and repeatedly.

Write to your mission board for information, perhaps also file there a first indication of interest.

8. For Further Information:

Read books and booklets on the whole field of missions. Send for the SVM literature list, *Literature on the Christian World Mission*.

Write for other literature and information to your own mission board or to the Student Volunteer Movement, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

Issued by

STUDENT VOLUNTEER MOVEMENT FOR CHRISTIAN MISSIONS

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